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20 Oregon Wineries to Know

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ADELSHEIM

When David Adelsheim planted his first vineyard in 1972, he established a style in his Pinot Noirs devoted to transparency and elegance. Dave Paige, who came to Adelsheim from Monterey County in California, has only improved on them since he became the winemaker in 2000. The estate sites, mostly in the Chehalem Mountains AVA, produce distinctive, delicate, single-vineyard wines and, blended together, the flagship Elizabeth's Reserve, which is more widely available.

ALEXANA

A chance meeting between veteran Oregon winemaker Lynn Penner-Ash (see profile on page 67) and Madaiah Revana, owner of Revana Family Vineyard in California's Napa Valley, led to Penner-Ash helping Revana find this magnificent site in Dundee Hills. The vines sprawl over 80 acres, producing grapes with a range of characteristics from a bewildering mix of soil types. Consulting winemaker Penner-Ash fashions a supple style inflected with raspberry, tea and spice.

ARCHERY SUMMIT

Gary Andrus was the owner of Pine Ridge in Napa Valley when he branched out into Oregon in 1993. He put together a collection of estate vineyard jewels scattered around Dundee Hills and earned a devoted following for his rich, complex Pinot Noirs. The full-bore style continues today under winemaker Anna Matzinger and vineyard manager Leigh Bartholomew, often resulting in wines of individual character, especially from Arcus and Renegade Ridge vineyards.

ARGYLE

Founded as a sparkling-wine house by Brian Croser of Australia and Christian Bizot of Champagne Bollinger, and now owned by Lion Nathan, Argyle has become a major player in Pinot Noir. Founding winemaker Rollin Soles relies primarily on Knudsen Vineyard in Dundee Hills and Lone Star Vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills. The winery farms both as sources for its flagship red Pinots, Nuthouse and Spirit House, wines that strike a deft balance between transparency and power. The entry-level Willamette Valley bottling delivers outstanding value.

A TO Z / REX HILL

Started as a négociant business, A to Z bought Rex Hill (with additional partners) in 2007, using the winemaking facility for its expanding value-wine business. It also reduced Rex Hill's production to only the best sites. Principals include Bill Hatcher, who managed Domaine Drouhin Oregon for its first 13 years, and Sam Tannahill, who made wine with Gary Andrus at Archery Summit. Winemaker Michael Davies, born and educated in New Zealand, often manages to lift the A to Z Pinot Noir



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into outstanding-score territory, belying its \$18 price and 100,000 cases-plus production. Since 2008, Davies has fashioned Rex Hill's Pinot Noirs into wines of real specificity, especially the Alloro and Jacob-Hart bottlings.

BEAUX FRÈRES

Michael Etzel makes Pinot Noirs that taste of berries, mineral and spice from the vines he farms biodynamically on a former 88-acre pig farm that he bought with his brother-in-law, wine writer Robert Parker, in 1986. While planting the vineyard and waiting for the vines to mature, he worked harvests at Ponzi, learning the art of gentle handling to make silky, supple, expressive wines. Those labeled Beaux Frères Vineyard and Upper Terrace—the latter made from Dijon clones—usually rise to the top.

BERGSTRÖM

Josh Bergström gets power and ripeness in his Pinot Noirs, and in recent vintages has aimed for more elegance within the generous style. The estate vineyard in Dundee Hills, its wines juicy with red fruit character, contrasts with the mineral cast from de Lancellotti, Bergström's brother-in-law's vineyard next to the winery in Chehalem Mountains. An entry-level Willamette Valley Pinot Noir called Old Stones usually offers great value.

BETHEL HEIGHTS

The grapes for the winery's deliberately delicate style come from the Casteel family's home vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills and the Justice Vineyard next door. The best wines, such as West Block, Flat Block and Casteel Reserve, have real presence and generosity, often with mineral undertones.

BRICK HOUSE

Former *CBS News* correspondent Doug Tunnell put the vines into his 40-acre vineyard site on Ribbon Ridge in 1990, and he still lives on the property, farming the vines and making the wines. Tunnell's Pinot Noirs aim for suppleness and elegance, and there's often a pleasant cinnamon note wafting through the blackberry and cherry fruit. The Evelyn's and Les Dijonnais bottlings are usually the standouts.

CHEHALEM

Harry Peterson-Nedry, who planted his Ridgecrest Vineyard on Ribbon Ridge in 1980, founded this winery in 1993 in partnership with Bill and Cathy Stoller. The style brings out the nuances of the single-vineyard wines: the delicate red fruit of Ridgecrest, the floral overtones of Corral Creek (next to the winery on Highway 99W) and the plum and mineral of the Stoller Vineyard (in Dundee Hills). Harry handed over the winemaking reins this year to his daughter, Wynne, but remains active.

DOMAINE DROUHIN OREGON

Winemaker Véronique Drouhin-Boss has always taken a humble approach to the wines of the family's Oregon operation, keeping the winemaking straightforward and aiming for deft balance rather than dramatic presence. Textures are often firm rather than silky. The best vintages offer red fruit flavors that retain their freshness as the wines age. A reserve wine called Laurène, after Drouhin-Boss' daughter, has more richness.

DOMAINE SERENE

Three vineyard sites, two in Dundee Hills and one in Eola-Amity Hills, cover more than 150 acres, offering a wealth of distinctive personalities to weave into the domaine's wines, which are made in a style that's generous, supple and unusually complex. Ken Wright (see profile on page 68), the original winemaker, established the style, and Tony Rynders continued it through 2008. Current winemaker Erik Kramer draws from all the sites for the flagship Evenstad Reserve. Grace Vineyard is usually the richest and deepest bottling.

ELK COVE

Adam Campbell has been making his family's wines since 1995 in the picturesque winery just outside the town of Yamhill. The estate vineyards, most of them near the winery, also include sites in Chehalem Mountains. The style aims for silky texture and expressive fruit character. The complex flavors of Roosevelt Vineyard usually push it to the top of the list, but La Bohème's currant and plum can be equally good in some vintages.

ERATH

When Ste. Michelle Wine Estates of Washington bought this company from founder Dick Erath in 2006, it retained winemaker Gary Horner, who favors transparency in Pinot Noir, and invested in winery infrastructure. The single-vineyards, especially Prince Hill, show their nuances best in ripe vintages. The entry-level Willamette Valley bottling often delivers great value.

EVENING LAND

Seven Springs Vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills produced grapes for several producers' best Pinot Noirs until 2007, when Evening Land leased it and the adjacent Anden Vineyard, which had been separated in a family dispute. The team, headed by consulting winemaker Dominique Lafon, also a star in Burgundy, sorted the reassembled site into sections that produce vivid, refined and racy wines. Despite a family resemblance, each shows unique stature and character. The estate bottling is distinctive enough, but the Summum and La Source bottlings delve even deeper.

PENNER-ASH

Lynn Penner-Ash made supple, expressive Pinot Noirs at Rex Hill from 1988 to 2002. By 1998, she and her husband, Ron, were making wine for their own label. Most of their Pinot Noirs are single-vineyard bottlings from top-ranked vineyards, including Shea, situated just over the hill. The open-textured style lets each site express its personality. The basic Willamette Valley blend is typically a step above the competition, and the flagship wine, a barrel selection called Pas de Nom, can equal the best in Oregon. Also look for the single-vineyard bottlings from the home vineyard, Dussin.

PONZI

As a Pinot Noir pioneer, Dick Ponzi established a ripe and generous while deftly balanced approach that influenced subsequent Oregon Pinot Noir leaders, though most of whom, such as Domaine Serene, Archery Summit and Shea, went on to make wines in a style far more opulent than his. His daughter, Luisa, who took over as winemaker in 1993, has stayed the course and continues to make elegant, flavorful Pinot Noirs from the family's own four vineyards in Chehalem Mountains and some purchased grapes. The Reserve and Vineyard Select bottlings consistently deliver extra depth. The entry-level Tavola often gets into outstanding territory.

ST. INNOCENT

Mark Vlossak's delicate, transparent wine style has shown greater clarity and precision since he teamed with the owners of Zenith Vineyard in 2006 to build a modern winery, tasting room and event facility next to the vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills. Vlossak buys from as many as 10 different vineyards, bottling some separately; Zenith, Justice and Temperance Hill tend to be standouts. Others go into the entry-level Villages Cuvée.

SOTER

Tony Soter left a successful winemaking career in California to focus on Oregon Pinot Noir. His estate vineyard, Mineral Springs Ranch, shares a hilltop with Ken Wright's Abbott Claim. Soter's Pinot Noirs, from the entry-level North Valley blend to the estate wine, aim for pure flavors, deft balance and the transparency that this grape can deliver. In good vintages, the estate wine shows currant and plum flavors.

KEN WRIGHT

The daddy of the single-vineyard Pinot producers bottles 10 sites separately every vintage, with no appellation-wide blends to

dilute the precision. Wright now owns three vineyards: Abbott Claim and Savoya in Yamhill-Carlton, and Canary Hill in Eola-Amity Hills, and speaks eloquently about the soils and "mother rock" rather than trying to define each one's personality. In most vintages, his own vineyards, plus Shea and Nysa, tend to shine in a strong field.

INDEPENDENT VINEYARDS

Many wineries in Oregon buy grapes from independent vineyards. Often these go into Willamette Valley blends, but when they are bottled as single-site wines, some stand out. Shea vineyard has consistently produced the greatest number, and some of the best. Other top vineyards named on labels, such as Resonance, are seen exclusively on one or two wineries. The following list identifies vineyards whose names you are likely to find on the labels of at least three wineries in addition to the vineyard owner's brand.

FREEDOM HILL

In the Coast Range just south of the McMinnville AVA, the 71-acre Freedom Hill Vineyard lies on sedimentary soils that produce dark berry flavors, while windy conditions make for firm tannins. The vineyard is owned and managed by Dan and Helen Dusschee. Made by Ken Wright, King Estate, Lange, Panther Creek and St. Innocent.

HYLAND

This 154-acre vineyard, one of Oregon's largest and oldest, occupies a hilltop in the McMinnville AVA. A new agreement with NW Wine Co. allocates some parcels to homeowners adjacent to the site, but bright, focused, fruit-centered wines are currently on the market from Erath, Penner-Ash and Soléna.

MEREDITH MITCHELL

This 104-acre site in the McMinnville AVA, owned and operated by Susan Meredith and Frank Mitchell, produces small clusters and intense flavors, making wines that dance with lively acidity. Made by Cana's Feast, EIEIO, Raptor Ridge, Winderlea, Walter Scott and Ken Wright.

SHEA

Dick and Deirdre Shea's 140-acre site is in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, with south-facing slopes on sedimentary soils over fractured sandstone. Pinot Noir grapes, on all but 3.5 acres of the site, get consistently ripe, a trait that characterizes Shea's own wines and those of the dozens of wineries Shea has sold its grapes to over the years. Made by Auteur, Beaux Frères, Bergström, Broadley, J.K. Carriere, Elk Cove, Panther Creek, Penner-Ash, Raptor Ridge, Rex Hill, St. Innocent, Winderlea and Ken Wright—many of whom often make their richest and most opulent wines from these grapes.

STOLLER

Bill Stoller purchased the family farm in 1993 and converted its 373 acres into the largest contiguous vineyard in Dundee Hills. Farmed by Argyle, which gets a significant portion of the Pinot Noir grapes, the vineyard is also a prime supplier to Chehalem, where Stoller is a partner. The grapes show distinctive red fruit character and firm structure in those labels' wines, as well as in wines made by Boedecker, Purple Hands and Stoller's own winery.

TEMPERANCE HILL

The fairly high elevation—660 feet to 860 feet—makes this 25-acre vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills AVA ripen late. Owners Lin Shen and Eddie Koo give free rein to vineyard manager Dai Crisp to farm organically. The dark fruit flavors, with earthy undertones, distinguish Pinot Noirs made by Adelsheim, Bergström, J.K. Carriere, Panther Creek, St. Innocent and Torii Mor.

ZENA CROWN

This 83-acre vineyard, planted entirely to Pinot Noir, rolls over low hills at the southern end of the Eola-Amity Hills AVA,

facing mostly southeast. The shallow, well-drained volcanic soils that dominate the AVA produce grapes with dark fruit character and precise focus. Made by Penner-Ash, Kudos, Soléna and Expression 44°.